



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

## JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

---

Office of Communications • Mark Dallas Loeffler, Director  
1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • Fax: 512-475-1415

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 18, 2010

Contact: Jim Suydam  
(512) 463-5339  
(512) 417-5382 cell

### Work begins on Smith County's Texas State Veterans Home *Veterans home will be first of its kind with homey, cottage-like setting*

AUSTIN — A cheering crowd of veterans and local leaders joined Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson Wednesday to break ground for a new Texas State Veterans Home in Tyler.

"This home will provide the best care anywhere for our veterans," Patterson said. "Texas State Veterans Homes are where honor lives, and this will be the best one we've ever built."

Smith County Judge Joel Baker, Tyler Mayor Barbara Bass, state Representatives Tommy Merritt and Leo Berman and Dr. Kirk Calhoun, president of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler spoke at the groundbreaking, along with Bill McLemore, congressional liaison for the VA's Heart of Texas Health Care Network.

The home will serve area veterans who need long-term nursing care. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are more than 16,326 veterans in Smith County alone. About 7,400 of those veterans are older than 65.

The home will be built on the grounds of Camp Fannin, where many World War II veterans began their service. The home should be open to veterans and their spouses by the fall of 2011.

Texas State Veterans Homes offer low-cost, high-quality long-term nursing care for Texas veterans and their spouses. The yet to be named Texas State Veterans Home will be the first of its kind in Texas, offering family-style living in a small, cottage-like setting. It will be the eighth Texas State Veterans Home built in Texas since Patterson authored the legislation creating the long-term care program in 1997.

Unlike previous Texas State Veterans Homes, the Smith County home will consist of 10 cottages and one common building. The design approach for each cottage focuses on drawing residents into social connection. This is done by mixing the best communal aspects of a home while still maintaining privacy and independence for residents.

An open kitchen, dining room and large table are at the heart of each of the 10 cottages. Family-style meals will be served at the table and residents can enjoy each other's company afterward in a large living room with a fireplace. This hearth, or communal focus of the home, is what sets this Texas State Veterans Home apart from any other long-term care facility in Texas.

— more —

“The kitchen is the heart of any home, and the Texas State Veterans Home we’re going to build in Smith County takes that into account,” Patterson said.

A total of 10 private rooms, each with its own bathroom, will flank the hearth. Each cottage will be set up as a “non-lift” facility, where overhead tracks with slings in each resident’s room will provide safe transport of non-ambulatory residents from bed to bath.

Because the VA subsidizes a significant portion of a veteran’s cost to stay in a Texas State Veterans Home, the daily out-of-pocket rates are well below market average and include the cost of medications. Spouses of Texas veterans and Gold Star parents are also eligible for care in Texas State Veterans Homes.

The newest Texas State Veterans Home will be built on 20 acres donated by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. The heavily wooded site was inaccessible for Wednesday’s groundbreaking, which was held at the Camp Fannin Veterans Memorial at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

The home will be built with a grant of about \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with the remaining 35 percent paid for by the Texas Veterans Land Board.

The new Texas State Veterans Home will join seven others across the state in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen and Temple.

Touchstone Communities, which has its headquarters in San Antonio, will manage the Tyler Texas State Veterans Home. Touchstone Communities provides extensive health care services, including skilled-nursing care, assisted living, Alzheimer’s care and rehabilitative services. Touchstone already manages Texas State Veterans Homes in Amarillo, Bonham, Floresville and Temple.

Texas State Veterans Homes offer a broad spectrum of health care services, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and certified, secured Alzheimer’s units, each with its own secured outdoor courtyard.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Homes and special home, land and home improvement loans for Texas veterans, call 800-252-VETS (800-252-8387) or visit our website at [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com).

DOWNLOAD BROADCAST-QUALITY VIDEO OF WHAT THE NEWEST TEXAS STATE VETERANS HOME WILL LOOK LIKE HERE:

[https://www.yousendit.com/transfer.php?action=batch\\_download&batch\\_id=dXFVck96SEJ5Ukh2Wmc9PQ&rcpt=david.little@glo.state.tx.us](https://www.yousendit.com/transfer.php?action=batch_download&batch_id=dXFVck96SEJ5Ukh2Wmc9PQ&rcpt=david.little@glo.state.tx.us)

###